Efforts to attract more tourists

4410. SHRI SURENDRA LATH: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) what efforts are being initiated to attract more tourists in different parts of the country with particular emphasis on Uttarakhand;

(b) whether unauthorized activities near shrines of Uttarakhand are being restricted by the respective Governments; and

(c) if not, what are the reasons therefor and what efforts will be made in order to maintain the sanctity of temples and shrines in the country?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) The Ministry of Tourism is promoting tourism in different parts of the country including Uttarakhand through publicity campaigns, literature and dissemination of information through its website as well as through the 20 domestic and 13 overseas India Tourism Offices.

(b) and (c) The maintenance of law and order and restriction on unauthorized activities near shrines is the responsibility of the concerned shrine board/trust/local authorities and the respective State/UT Governments.

Development and promotion of monasteries in Sikkim

4411. SHRI O.T. LEPCHA: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) the total amount provided to the State Government of Sikkim during the last three years for the development and promotion of monasteries in Sikkim to attract Buddhist tourists from countries like Japan and the South East Asian countries;

(b) the names and the number of such monasteries selected for the purpose in the future in Sikkim; and

(c) the necessary steps taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) to (c) The Ministry of Tourism, Government of India has sanctioned Rs. 180.83

lakhs and released Rs. 144.00 lakhs as first installment to the Government of Sikkim for development of Tashiding Monastery in Sikkim in the years 2004-05. Ministry of Tourism is promoting the Buddhist sites in the country including the monasteries in Sikkim through its publicity campaigns. A specific campaign namely "Come to India--Walk with the Buddha" has been launched in China, Japan, Korea and South East Asian countries.

Removal of encroachment from Tomb of Sher Shah in Sasaram, Bihar

†4412. SHRI ALI ANWAR: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) what steps Government are taking to free the tomb of Sher Shah in Sasaram, Bihar from encroachment;

(b) the details of scheme of Government regarding the system of discharge of water of the pond situated in the middle of the tomb premises; and

(c) what are the details of scheme for the development and conservation of the tomb in accordance with its historical importance?

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) The Archaeological Survey of India has filed a case before the Hon'ble High Court, Patna praying for removal of the unauthorized and illegal constructions within the protected monument of 'Tomb of Sher Shah' in Sasaram.

(b) The Superintending Archaeologist, Archaeological Survey of India, Patna Circle has approached the District Authority for revival of inlet and outlet channels and to prevent the immersion of idols, washing of cloth, etc. to ensure flow of clean water.

(c) For the conservation of the tomb and its proper development, a provision of Rs. 23 lakhs has been made for the year 2007-08, details of which are given in the Statement.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.